

Health and Human Services Committee
62nd Montana State Legislature
February 4, 2011

Honorable Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in regards to House Bill 267. I stand in support of this bill. As a mother, grandmother, nurse and a person who has struggled with obesity most of my life, I believe that the strategies contained in this bill are soundly supported in science and the evidenced based practices that are shown to prevent obesity.

Health behaviors that are developed in the formative preschool years are likely to be carried into adulthood.


Children's physical activity levels are not at recommended levels for good health. The average number of hours a child is in front of a screen (TV, computer, hand held game) is up to five hours per day. Even young children are widely exposed to screen media every day. The long term effects are unknown. However, research has linked TV viewing by young children to increased aggressive behavior, lower academic performance, poor nutrition, obesity and sleep disorders. Because of these adverse effects, The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no TV viewing for children under 2 years of age. (<http://aappolicy.aappublications.org/cgi/content/full/pediatrics;107/2/423>). Limiting screen time and promoting more physical activity opportunities for children not only helps them be more physically active but it helps children eat better too.

Prevention of obesity is cost effective. The myriad of chronic and life threatening diseases that occur secondary to poor nutrition, inactivity, overweight and obesity are severely impacting quality and quantity of life and draining our financial resources. The 2011-2020 Montana Nutrition and Physical Activity State Plan to Prevent Obesity cites the financial cost of obesity:

"The Institute of Medicine (IOM) has estimated the national costs for illness related to childhood obesity per se to be \$14 billion annually." (Institute of Medicine: Progress in Preventing Childhood Obesity: How do we measure up? Washington, D.C.: The National Academies Press, 2007.)

The proactive nature of this bill is an investment in our future generations. Please consider the future of our state and our nation and pass this bill to the House Floor.

Respectfully,


Donna Greenwood R.N.